



USAID
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Youth Employability Skills Network

Associate Cooperative Agreement
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Quarterly Report
October through December 2011

Education Development Center



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Acronyms

ALMM	Active labor market measures
AOTR	Agreement Officer's Technical Representative
AWP	Annual Workplan
BCM	Business Confederation of Macedonia
COP	Chief of Party
CC	Career Center (VET)
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DOCS	Development, Outreach and Communication Specialist
ESA	Employment Service Agency
ESC	Local Economic and Social Council
EDC	Education Development Center Inc.
FAM	Financial and Administrative Manager
GCDF	Global Career Development Facilitator
ILO	International Labor Organization
ICP	Individual Career Plan
JC	Job Club (ESA)
HCN	Host Country National
HICD	Human and Institutional Capacity Development
MES	Ministry of Education and Science
MK	"Moja Kariera"
MLSP	Ministry of Labor and Social Policy
MOF	Mladinski Obrazoven Forum
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NESC	National Economic and Social Council
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
ORM	Employers Organization of Macedonia
IT	Information Technology
PMP	Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
PPD	Public –Private Dialogue
PPR	Project Portfolio Review
RC	Regional Coordinators
RFO	Regional Field Offices
SOIM	Skopje Office and Information Manager
SOM	Skopje Office Manager
STS	Senior Technical Specialist
VET	Vocational and Educational Training
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WBL	Work-based Learning
WRS	Work Readiness Skills
YES	Youth Employability Skills Network

Executive Summary

The YES Network Project productively worked with all its partners to make significant progress toward its end goal. By undertaking public-private dialogue through the formation of local Economic and Social Councils, and working with VET schools, the State Employment Agency and non-governmental organizations, the project is moving toward the goal of enhancing youth employability skills through a multifaceted approach. As a result of discussions with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLSP), YES was requested to provide assistance with the drafting of the Law on Internships while assistance could also be provided to the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) for its efforts in creating a professionalized and accredited cadre of Career Advisors.

To facilitate Public-Private Dialogue that will improve demand-supply labor exchange at the local level, YES organized a conference on the subject, involving local government representatives, employers, workers representatives and civil society. The Director of the Croatian Office of Social Partnership and a senior staff person from the Croatian Employment Service Agency offered a regional perspective and experience by participating in the conference. The Local Economic and Social Council (ESC) for Strumica was established, while the basis for the establishment of a local ESC for Tetovo was determined.

The YES team adapted the Work Readiness Curriculum for implementation in various contexts, including for NGOs implementing the work readiness skills curriculum training for unregistered and unemployed out-of-school youth and for ESAs delivering the same to registered unemployed youth. Additional renovation activities in three (3) Job Clubs were completed, creating appropriate conditions in which Career Counselors can effectively perform their duties. Career related materials (books, DVD's, flip camera and posters) were provided to Job Clubs as part of the renovation and refurbishing. The Job Club in Strumica was officially re-opened, and preparations for re-openings in Tetovo and Bitola were undertaken. Discussions with MoLSP concluded with a request to YES to facilitate the activities required to complete the drafting of a law on internships. Official Career Center (CC) opening ceremonies were organized in three schools and CC activities/services promoted among students, parents, municipality representatives and the business community. Career-related materials (books, DVD's, posters) were delivered to 11 Career Centers.

In its work to strengthen the capacity of ESA and private job matching companies to ensure trained youth have access to up-to-date information, YES facilitated various achievements. A five (5) day WRS workshop for registered unemployed youth in the ESA Center in Strumica, was organized and implemented through a cooperative effort with a Strumica-based NGO focused on youth unemployment. Two WRS workshops for ESA Centers in Bitola and Tetovo were arranged. The project began the development of a WBL program to meet the needs of ESA Centers' unemployed registered youth, and also reviewed WBL materials currently used in Macedonia.

Creative innovative mechanisms to make VET schools and the VET Center more responsive and relevant were developed during the quarter. Twelve (12) schools have developed Career Center Action plans and a core WBL program was developed to suit the specific needs of the secondary education (VET) system.

1. Program Activities and Outcomes

1.1. Facilitate Public-Private Dialogue that will improve demand-supply labor exchange at the local level

PPD Conference

YES, together with its partners, continued working towards a public private dialogue to better match the skills developed by youth in schools to those needed by employers in local labor markets. To establish, maintain and enhance the dialogue between the supply and demand sides of the labor market, YES continued supporting and facilitating the process of formation and operation of local Economic and Social Councils (ESC).

Since Macedonians lack knowledge and practice in social dialogue on a local level, YES organized and hosted a two-day conference titled “Local Economic and Social Dialogue and Youth Employability Skills”, held on October 28th and 29th, 2011 in Ohrid. The aim of the Conference was twofold: to increase awareness among local stakeholders and to expand their knowledge about social dialogue practiced at a local level in the region. Two individuals from Croatia, one from the Office for Social Partnership and the other from Employment Service Agency, spoke about social dialogue, Social and Economic Councils, youth unemployment mitigation and youth employability skills. Representatives from the Macedonian MLSP, the International Labor Organization (ILO), Organization of Employers of Macedonia, as well as a member of the local ESC from Kumanovo, gave their presentations and views as to the importance and utility of local social dialogue.

Sixty (60) representatives from local governments, employers, employees, education and employment centers from the municipalities of Tetovo, Bitola, Strumica, Gostivar, Prilep and Stip attended the conference. Presidents of the Municipal Councils of Tetovo, Bitola, Gostivar and Stip were also in attendance.

After the conference the attendees participated in a workshop where they had the opportunity to ask questions, to air their views, discuss the options afforded by local conditions and to share their hopes and reservations regarding social dialogue and ESCs as tools for positively and conclusively addressing local social and economic challenges.

Establishment of local ESCs

Bitola:

To increase awareness among municipality officials, the STS for PPD, during this reporting period, met with members of the Municipal Council of Bitola to present and discuss with them the concept of a local ESC, its structure, role, and functioning. Over half the members of the Municipal Council, including its President, agreed that engaging in formal dialogue with the local community on important issues, including youth unemployment, was desirable and likely to generate ideas for addressing the challenge of getting young people into work. However, it has become clear that it is crucially important to have the unequivocally expressed willingness and open commitment of the Mayor in order to establish the ESC in Bitola and facilitate its functioning. Although the Mayor has indicated his agreement with the

establishment of an ESC, his support has been muted. There appears to be no opposition from the Mayor, but rather, inattention to the issue. The President of the Municipal Council has stated her positive inclination towards the local ESC, and informed YES that the Municipality has included the formation of the ESC as one of the objectives in its Strategy for local economic development. She also indicated that early in 2012, the Municipality will establish the Bitola ESC.

Tetovo:

In December, the Tetovo Municipal Council formally decided to establish a local ESC. This council is envisaged to have 15 members equally representing local government, employers and workers, and, also the Employment Service Agency (ESA) and the education secondary education sector.

Strumica:

The Strumica Municipality established a local ESC during this reporting period. The ESC will serve as an advisory body on issues such as employment of youth and the link between labor markets needs as defined by employers and the skills developed by young Macedonians during their formal education. The inauguration of the council took place on December 22nd, 2011. The Mayor of Strumica, the President of the Assembly of the Employers Organization and the President of Trade Unions, signed the Agreement that brought the ESC formally into being. The ceremony was followed by the first constitutive session of the Council, during which its members elected the ESC chairperson and secretary. The Honorable Paul D. Wohlers, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Macedonia, attended this event to salute and encourage this momentous step for the Municipality of Strumica.

Results 1.1

- Local Economic and Social Council for Strumica established.
- Formal basis for establishment of Local Economic and Social Council for Tetovo provided.

1.2. Develop venues for meeting immediate skill/training needs of the labor market and career development opportunities

“Work Readiness Skills” training for youth serving NGOs

In October, the YES STS for PPD together with NGO representatives from the three municipalities adapted the Work Readiness Skills Program, customizing it to the needs of target group with which the NGOs will work - unregistered, out-of-school and unemployed youth - developing a suitably structured active learning methodology for its implementation. The program includes eight (8) modules, takes a total of 24 hours to implement and will be delivered by NGO based trainers.

In November, YES announced an open call for project proposals to select an implementing partner NGO responsible for the delivery of a series of trainings in the work readiness skills curriculum to out-of-school, unregistered and unemployed youth. Only those NGOs whose staff had participated in the YES/EDC WRS training were eligible to apply.

Proposals submitted by NGOs from Strumica, Bitola and Tetovo were reviewed using a structured and standard procedure by a committee comprised of the YES CoP, STS for PPD, the YES FAM and the USAID AOTR.

For Strumica, the NGO ED Planetum, a non-profit organization established in January 1999, was selected. In Bitola, the committee selected the Youth Cultural Center (YCC), a non-profit organization formed fourteen (14) years ago that focuses its activities on effective functioning and development of programs for youth and volunteers.

For Tetovo, the NGO Youth Educational Forum (YEF) was selected as the most appropriate entity to implement the work readiness training. The NGO YEF is a non-profit organization established in 1999. It is located in Skopje, and has fourteen centers that operate throughout the country, conducting activities related to providing nonformal education, running a Research and Policymaking Program and Youth Activism Program. In 2010, YEF established an office in Tetovo that manages activities engaging young people in the municipality through interventions including but not limited to soft skills development and training aimed at improving and enhancing job skills. At the final proposed training location, the predominantly Albanian community of Tearce, the NGO Center for Education and Development (CED) was selected. CED has operated in the area since 2006.

The NGOs will each receive a grant, with a maximum value of \$3,000, from YES Network Project to deliver the WRS program in their municipalities to young people who are unemployed, out-of-school and not registered in the local ESA. These individuals, as a consequence of their participation in the training, will be more aware of and practice work search and job entry skills and approaches that are likely to help them find work. At the same time through delivering the WRS training, the capacity of local youth serving NGO to provide trainings for the youth will also improved.

The selected NGOs will start to deliver training in early January. Each training will take place over four to five days to a group of 20-25 individuals. The NGO training providers will use the pool of facilitators from the NGO sector trained by YES Network Project to deliver the WRS.

Job Club Activities

YES continued providing support in the three municipalities through the renovation and upgrading of existing 3 Job Clubs within State ESAs in Bitola, Strumica and Tetovo; for the purpose of providing youth with venues where they can obtain relevant information about the labor market and employer's needs, as well as to allow them to explore different educational and career options.

Minor additional renovation activities in the three (3) JCs included reconstruction and painting walls, fixing new curtains and blinds, changing and improving lighting all intended to create comfortable and inviting environments both for clients and the career counselors. These activities were conducted and financially supported by ESAs. Career development materials such as books, DVD's, posters and flip camera were also provided through YES.

Following renovation and upgrading the YES Network team and JCs staff organized formal openings/re-openings of the premises. A ribbon cutting ceremony was conducted on December 14th at the Strumica JC where local authorities, ESA staff from Strumica, Shtip and Valandovo, representatives of the Municipality, teachers from secondary schools in Strumica, representatives of businesses and USAID and YES Network staff were present. Preparations for opening the JCs in Tetovo and Bitola were made during December.

Career Center Activities

In this reporting period YES worked with secondary schools from the three pilot municipalities to promote Career Center (CC) services among students, parents and the business community. Also Career Centers were provided with relevant career related materials such as books, DVDs and posters obtained from the US. These materials will be used by teachers and students in implementation of different career development related activities in schools.

On November 22, the first Career Center was opened at the Vocational Secondary School “Nikola Karev” in Strumica. The ribbon cutting, conduct by USAID Mission Director Dr. Robert Wuertz and the Mayor of Strumica Mr. Zoran Zaev, officially opened the Career Center. The students from this school, who are involved in the “Work Readiness Program” presented the Career Center’s resources and services as well as the activities they have implemented. Career Center resources and services will help students find their ideal jobs and learn about different career opportunities and how these relate to their knowledge, personal attributes and skills.

Career Center opening ceremonies were also organized in two Bitola schools. On November 29th, the Vocational Secondary Schools “Gjorgji Naumov” and “Dr. Jovan Kalauzi” hosted ribbon cutting ceremonies for the opening of Career Centers in each.

In the next quarter a CC opening ceremony will be organized in Vocational Secondary School “Mosa Pijade” in Tetovo.

Internship Law

Employers most frequently stated, during YES organized focus groups held during the quarter in connection with the establishment of the baseline for the project, that their lack of enthusiasm for opening internships for out of school and unemployed youth was the absence of legislation on the matter. Resulting from discussions with the Minister of Labor and Social Policy, it was determined that YES could play a role in facilitating the process of drafting the Internship Law. YES’s most likely role would consist of organizing meetings for the working group focused on drafting the law and the public debates required to obtain broad inputs regarding the content of the draft. At the close of the quarter YES, USAID and MoLSP were preparing a Memorandum of Understanding(MOU) detailing the responsibilities of each party.

Results 1.2:

- Work Readiness Curriculum adapted for NGOs
- NGOs to implement WRS selected
- Additional renovation activities in three (3) Job Clubs completed to create appropriate conditions in which Career Counselors can most effectively perform their duties.
- Career related materials (books, DVD’s, flip camera and posters) provided to Job Clubs.
- Job Club in Strumica officially re-opened.
- Preparations for Job Clubs re-openings in Tetovo and Bitola undertaken.
- Discussions with MoLSP concluded with YES being requested to facilitate the activities required to complete the drafting of a Law on Internships.

- Official Career Center (CC) opening ceremonies organized in three schools and CC activities/services promoted among students, parents, municipality representatives and the business community.
- Career related materials (books, DVD's, posters) delivered to 11 Career Centers.

1.3. Strengthen the job services capacity of ESA and private job matching companies to ensure trained youth have access to up-to-date information on job openings and career development opportunities

YES STS staff together with ESA representatives from three municipalities worked to customize the YES Work Readiness Skills Curriculum (WRS) to meet the specific needs of the registered unemployed. The resulting tool is an eight module WRS Curriculum to be delivered in a twenty-five hour training. YES and ESA have planned these trainings to be conducted jointly between ESA staff and NGO personnel since the latter are more familiar and better practiced in the application of active teaching methodologies. Working together with the NGOs, ESA staff will learn and enhance their knowledge and practice of active instruction.

Following the customization of the WRS for ESA Centers, an accompanying handbook was created in cooperation with a senior ESA Skopje staff person and published in hard copy and electronically on CD.. Two hundred and fifty (250) copies of the handbook and the CD were published.

Upon the completion of the publications, the WRS program was implemented in ESA Job Clubs to improve the capacity of ESA staff to promote JC services and to deliver WR services to clients. Registered unemployed youth were, through workshops conducted by ESA and youth serving NGO co-implementers, afforded access to up-to date information on career development information and employability skills.

These workshops are implemented through five day interactive trainings for groups of between twenty and twenty-five (20-25) individuals. Through WRS workshops implemented in ESA Centers, two representatives from each of the ESA Centers in Bitola, Strumica and Tetovo, will be also be trained as facilitators for WRS training program. The Strumica ESA Center implemented its first workshop between December 12-16, 2011. The ESA Centers in Bitola and Tetovo have made arrangements for the next two WRS workshops.

Professional orientation tests are one of the important tools employed in career counseling and must be available to ESA staff working JCs in order for them to effectively and sensibly meet their responsibilities of accurately and comprehensively informing their young clients. To modernize the practice of this function and to strengthen the capacity of ESA staff and update JC services, YES staff worked on finding appropriate tools which can be employed in Macedonia. Sources of professional orientation tests in Serbia, Croatia and the United States were explored to determine their suitability and availability. This will remain a work in progress during the coming quarter.

Work Based Learning Program (WBL)

Work Based Learning (WBL) for an individual takes place at an actual place of work and is a carefully planned, structured and mentored real-time work learning experience. It is a supervised work

experience lasting between a few weeks or up to six months and takes place at a real worksite, to complement classroom education such as the WRS curriculum. Work-based learning (WBL) programs offer youth hands-on workplace experience which provides the environment and the opportunities for learning work-related skills and abilities that cannot be acquired in a classroom.

YES developed a WBL program specially designed for ESA based on a generic WBL tool developed by international and host-country consultants. A team consisting of the YES Network STS for Labor Markets, a local consultant and the ESA coordinator/liaison for YES customized the WBL consisted. The local consultant designed a draft program consisting of five (5) modules which was given to ESA coordinator/liaison and YES STS for review and further refinement.

Results 1.3

- Organized and implemented a five (5) day WRS workshop for registered unemployed youth in the ESA Center in Strumica through a cooperative effort with a Strumica-based youth serving NGO.
- Two WRS workshops for ESA Centers in Bitola and Tetovo arranged.
- WBL program to meet the needs of ESA Centers' unemployed registered youth is in the process of development.
- WBL materials currently used in Macedonia were reviewed and materials from other sources investigated.

1.4. Provide continuing professional development opportunities for teachers in Vocational Educational Training (VET) schools.

“Work Readiness Skills” training

Regional workshops for all teachers who participated in the work readiness training program were organized in Bitola, Strumica and Tetovo to formulate the implementation of Work Readiness Skills (WRS) modules in the schools to develop action plans for Career Center activities in the schools. Each teacher participating in this program developed an individual implementation plan containing specific elements of this program that they then embedded in the subjects they teach.

Many teachers from first 14 schools, who had not participated in the WRS trainings wanted to do so. To satisfy this demand, YES organized additional workshops. During the quarter, some one hundred (100) teachers participated in the first training which covered the first half of the WRS curriculum. Modules covered in these training sessions were: Introductory module, Personal Development, Appropriate Workplace Behavior and Communication Skills.

“Work Based Learning” Program

Local consultants, VET Center Advisors and the YES STS for VET worked on adapting the WBL program to mesh with the VET school curriculum. This WBL program will consist of four modules. Training materials for WBL workshops will also be designed and developed.

Results 1.4

- WRS workshops implemented and 100 additional teachers trained.
- Each teacher participating in WRS program has developed an individual implementation plan which s/he will apply to their teaching practice.

1.5. Creative innovative mechanisms to make VET schools and the VET Center more responsive and relevant

All twelve (12) schools that YES supported to establish and equip Career Centers (CC) developed Career Center Action Plans covering:

- Main CC objectives for school year 2011/12
- Activities which will be implemented to achieve main CC objectives
- Responsible persons designated to implement CC activities
- Promotion of CC activities to students and local community

In collaboration with the VET Center, YES worked to adapt the WBL Program and make it ready to pilot in schools and conduct all activities necessary for a successful introduction of this program into the VET school curriculum.

Also, in collaboration with the VET center, the YES STS for VET collected best teaching practices identified by teachers implementing WRS. A manual informing all teachers of these practices will be developed.

Results 1.5

- Twelve (12) schools developed Career Center Action plans.
- Core WBL program developed to suit the specific needs of the secondary education (VET) system.

1.6. Integrate productive connections with current and planned USAID and other donor workforce related activities

YES and Habitat for Humanity Macedonia – a USAID grantee - met to arrange and define possible areas of cooperation. Habitat is planning to implement its project in 7 Municipalities, three (3) of which are YES partners: Strumica, Tetovo and Prilep. Habitat will implement an internship program employing energy efficiency as the focus. It will train young people as energy auditors and to be involved in green jobs. In order to improve cooperation Habitat and YES Network agreed to meet monthly to ensure how complementarity can best be achieved to maximize projects impacts.

Meeting with Kultur Kontakt Austria resulted in permission to translate that entity's internship materials to review them for possible use by YES in its WBL program. The translations were completed and will be reviewed next quarter. Inadequacy of funds will not permit Kultur Kontakt to engage a consultant to work based learning issues as had been originally hoped.

At a meeting with the MoES during early November YES was informed that the Ministry had developed a plan for the creation of professionalized Career Advisors to serve in a dedicated capacity through the Macedonian educational system. The discussion covered the requirements for training such individuals and their accreditation in which there is a possibility that YES could be involved.

At the MoLSP, YES discussed the process of drafting an Internship Law with the Minister. It was concluded that YES could assist by organizing and facilitating meetings of the draft working group and also the public hearings and debates required for the process. Funding will be required for this.

Results 1.6

- Areas of cooperation between YES and Habitat Macedonia defined.

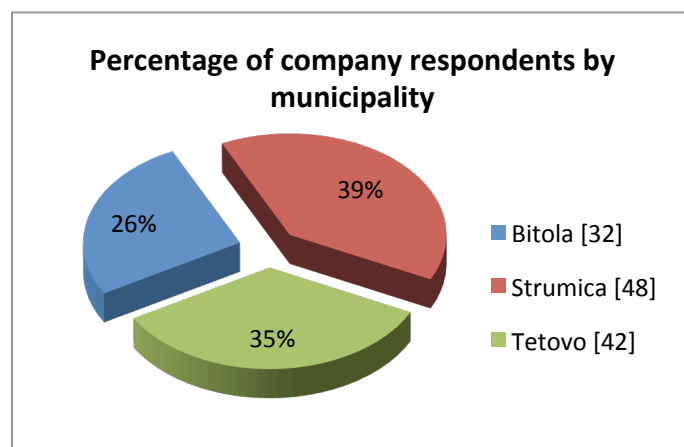
1.7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Finalizing the YES Network Baseline Study

During this quarter the Baseline Study was completed with the employers' and students' data gathered, analyzed and reported.

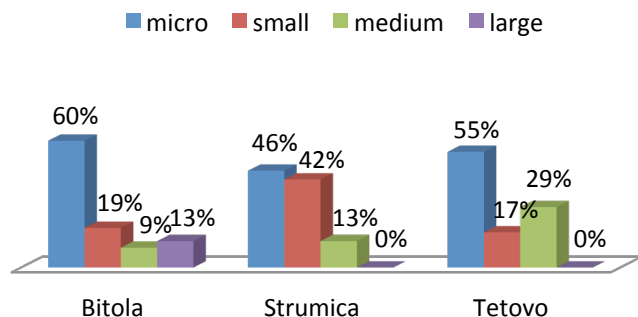
In October the employer survey was carried out. In each municipality, Tetovo, Strumica and Bitola, the local survey teams contacted employers and offered two ways to complete questionnaires; one was electronically and the second paper-based. It was hoped this would maximize the response rate.

Of the 195 companies contacted 122 responded to the survey, which is a very acceptable 63% response rate. In each of the three municipalities more than 30 companies filled in the questionnaire: 32 from Bitola (26% of the 122 companies participating); 48 from Strumica (39%) and 42 from Tetovo (34%).

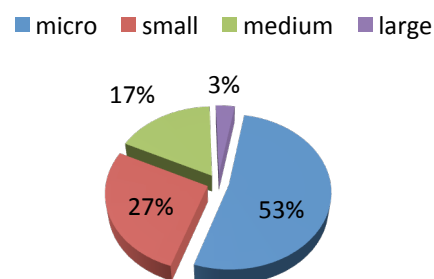


Almost all companies (97%) come from the private sector; and only 3, all from Bitola, are from the public sector. In general most of the establishments (52%) are micro companies with less than 10 employees. The same finding is repeated at the municipal level: 60% of the companies in Bitola are micro companies, 46% in Strumica and 55% in Tetovo. Only 3% are large companies, with more than 250 employees, all from Bitola.

Percentage of companies by size, per municipality



Percentage of companies by size in all three municipalities



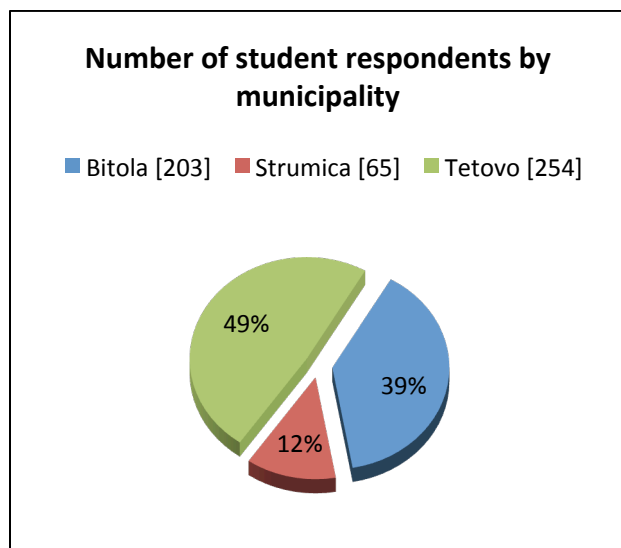
Regarding the companies' willingness to engage interns 65% of them expressed interest.

Following the questionnaire survey focus group discussions with company representatives were organized in each municipality. Of the 36 employers who were invited to participate (12 from each municipality), only 12 in total attended the focus group meetings: three in Bitola and nine in Tetovo. In Strumica none of the employers came although six had previously confirmed their firm intention to participate. The focus groups were conducted by the M&E specialist, with support from the M&E intern and respective Regional Coordinator. Each meeting lasted approximately two hours. The discussion was audio recorded and transcribed.

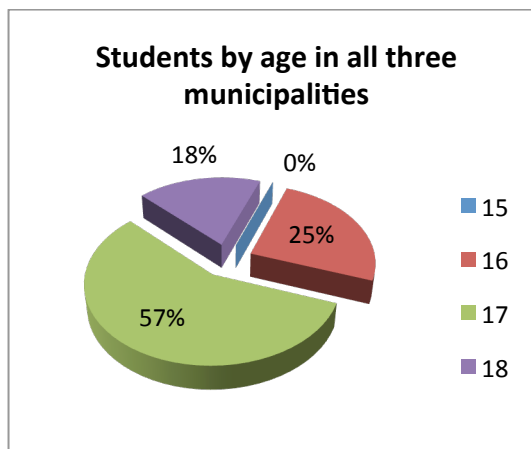
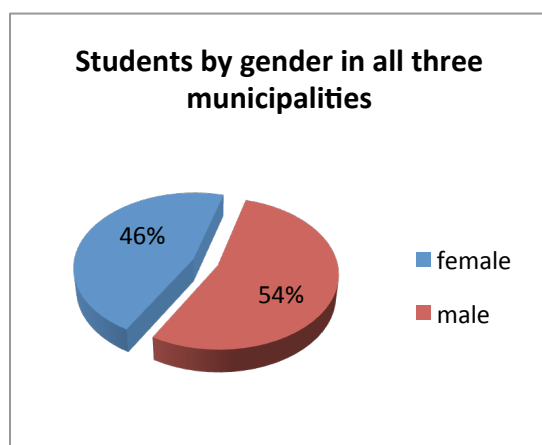
The general finding from the discussions is that the employers' biggest concern is related to having interns who are out-of-school since currently there is no law regulating such internships. Internships organized by secondary schools and universities are regulated by the Law on Vocational Education and Training and the Law on Higher Education respectively. Employers therefore would not risk having an intern until such law is in place and implemented since some have been penalized by the Labor Inspectorate for creating internships for out-of-school unemployed youth.

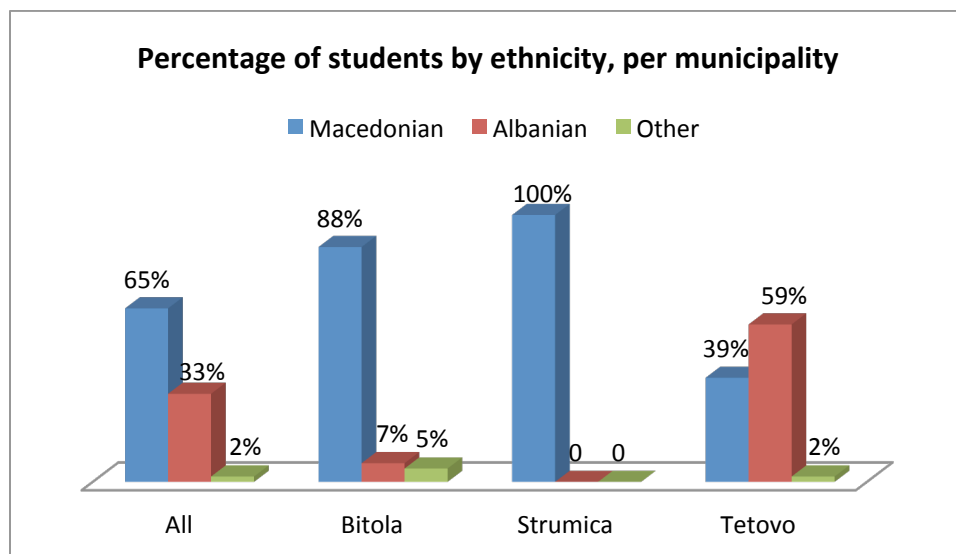
The student survey was conducted between November 3rd and December 13th, 2011. It was an online survey administered by the YES Network Regional Coordinators.

A total of 522 students from 11 schools completed the questionnaire: 254 from Tetovo, 203 from Bitola and 65 from Strumica. The total number of students who have participating in the WRS workshops is 718 from 13 schools: 337 from Tetovo, 293 from Bitola and 88 from Strumica.



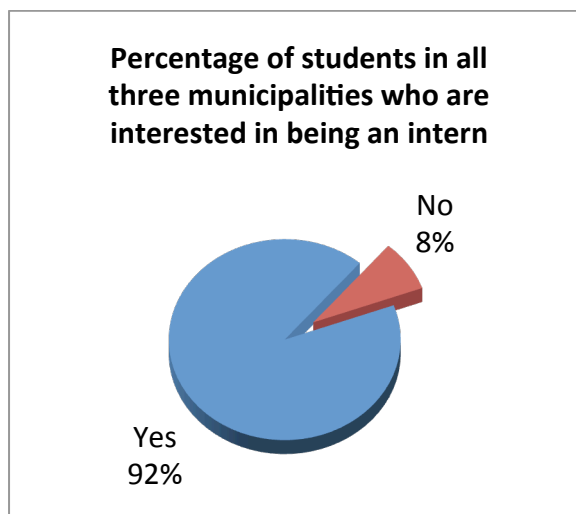
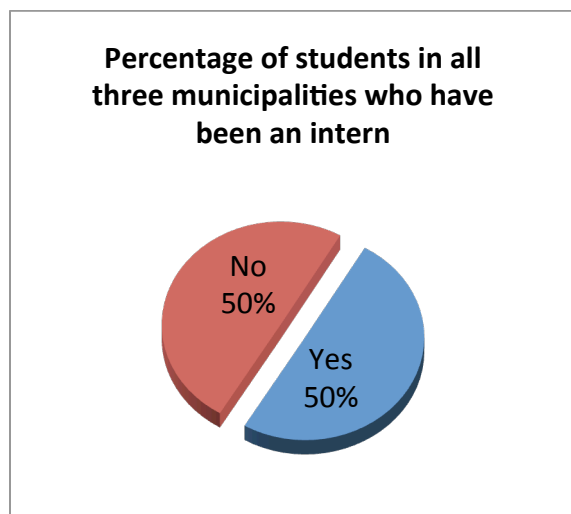
Most of the students (57%) are 17 years old and, therefore, in their third year of studies; this is case in all three municipalities. The gender distribution is slightly in favor of females, with 46% male and 54% female students. Regarding ethnicity, 65% of the students are Macedonian, 33% are Albanian, and remaining 2% from other ethnic backgrounds. In Bitola and Strumica, 85% are Macedonian, while in Tetovo that percentage is less than 40%, with around 60% being Albanian.





In general, the results of the employability skills self-assessment show that the students believed they possess very high levels of employability skills, which is contradicted by the opinion of teachers and employers. A probable explanation of this self-perception among students is the fact that most of them are not really aware what “a high level” actually constitutes and also significantly employability skills are.

This survey provided valuable information on the students’ experience of internships with 50% stating that they had been an intern. Asked whether they are willing to have an internship in the following school year, 92% responded positively.



Although majority of the students (72 % in Bitola, 80% in Tetovo and 95% in Strumica) reported that their schools have Career Centers, only very few (8%) stated they use them very often; most of them (25%) use the facility only sometimes. The individuals who do visit the Career Center in their school, mainly use it to attend the so-called ‘free classes’, to receive practical instruction from the teachers, for informing themselves about future education and career opportunities or for participating in job-related activities.

Reporting for the USAID Portfolio review

In the first half of October, the M&E specialist provided the USAID AOTR with the data needed for the annual USAID Portfolio Review. The data was collected from the YES database and project reports. The planning for the targets for the following years was performed as a joint effort by the YES Network senior program team members.

Finalization of the YES Network PMP FY2012

At the end of this quarter, the final YES Network PMP for Fiscal Year 2012 was finalized. It contains project indicators, as well as the USAID standard indicators.

YES data gathering system

The YES M&E data gathering system was presented to the secondary VET school teachers during the workshops which focused on planning the implementation of the WRS training and the functioning of the Career Centers. It was also presented to the ESA employees in separate meetings. The plan was accepted by them and no amendments were needed. It is expected that the result of informing teachers of about the YES data gathering system will be the collection much higher quality information about trainings and the use of the Career Centers.

YES Network Annual Report

The M&E specialist worked with the COP on the production of the Project Annual Report. The M&E intern supported the creation of the report. She was also working on the preparation of the AWP presentation for USAID and implementing partners' staff, held on 17th of November 2011 in the YES Network premises.

YES Network Project database

Regular updates of the Access database have been made.

Professional Orientation Tests

Initiated by a question from the Bitola ESA Center staff, the M&E specialist started an inquiry of possibilities for obtaining versions of Professional Orientation Tests considered the most up-to-date. Inquiries in Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia revealed that there are no in-country resources however there is a possibility to purchase the tests from Serbia albeit at high cost and with considerable use constraints. The EDC International Project Coordinator for YES Network has been in contact with US

based publishers of the tests exploring opportunities for acquiring a licenses for the tests. This effort will be continued in the next quarter.

Once the tests have been acquired it was decided to explore possibilities for standardization of these for use in Macedonia. This is a highly desirable action to take since this has not been done so far in Macedonia and, once completed, will be of great value to young people in their career planning efforts guided by staff at the Career Centers in schools or in the ESA Job Clubs.

Monitoring and Evaluation Accomplishments

- Baseline survey completed
- USAID Portfolio review reporting done
- YES Network PMP finalized
- Data gathering system agreed with project implementing partners
- Annual Work Plan presentation developed

2. Activities proposed for the coming quarter : January through March

2.1. Facilitate Public-Private Dialogue that will improve demand-supply labor exchange at the local level

- Facilitating the second session of the LESC Strumica.
- Facilitating the process of formalizing the establishment of the ESC in the Municipality of Tetovo.
- Meeting with the three new municipalities in which YES will start work in 2012 and identifying potential ESC members from those municipalities.
- Introduction of USAID/YES into three new Municipalities to inform about YES project activities as these will facilitate actions implemented by local actors and start the process of engaging future local partners in appreciating their potential for addressing the issues of increasing youth employability skills, defining what is necessary to do to reduce youth unemployment through local initiatives based on local definitions of possible responses to the issue.

2.2. Develop venues for meeting immediate skill/training needs of the labor market and career development opportunities

- Implementation of the WRS training by NGOs in three municipalities.
- Job Clubs in three (3) new Municipalities will be visited by YES STS and RC staff and assessments made of how YES can aid in enhancing the staff of these to deliver better client services. Purchase and adaptation of professional orientation tests for the needs of ESA JC staff to be realized through a cooperative effort between STS ESA and STS M&E including YES M&E Service Provider as needed.

The following actions will be undertaken during the coming quarter:

- CC opening ceremony will be organized in Secondary School “Mosa Pijade” in Tetovo. Local authorities as well as USAID representatives will join teachers, students, Municipality representatives and YES staff in official openings.
- CC activities will be implemented in all schools. This includes: promotion of CC services among students and local community; providing Career related services to students (e.g. job search trainings; possibility for WBL activities; possibilities for further education; recruitment of primary school students.

2.3. Strengthen the job services capacity of ESA and private job matching companies to ensure trained youth have access to up-to-date information on job openings and career development opportunities

- ESA JCs in Tetovo, Strumica and Bitola will implement WRS.
- WBL program review will be completed and delivered to ESA JCs staff.

2.4. Provide continuing professional development opportunities for teachers in Vocational Educational Training (VET) schools.

“Work Readiness Skills” program

Activities addressing this objective will focus on:

- Second series of Work Readiness workshops organized in Bitola, Tetovo and Strumica. Approximately 100 teachers from first 14 pilot schools will participate.
- Workshops with first group of teachers will be organized. The main objective of these will be implementation of WRS activities in school and sharing best teaching practices.

“Work Based Learning” Program

Addressing this objective will be:

- Training materials for WBL workshops will be developed.
- The first series of WBL workshops will be delivered.

2.5. Creative innovative mechanisms to make VET schools and the VET Center more responsive and relevant

Activities listed below are planned for the coming quarter:

- Adaptation of WBL program to the VET school curriculum will be achieved by local consultants, VET Center Advisors and YES Network STS for VET.
- All activities necessary for a successful introduction of the WBL program into the VET school curriculum will be conducted and concluded.

2.6. Integrate productive connections with current and planned USAID and other donor workforce related projects

A meeting is planned with the recently arrived EU Head of Operations at which the YES Network Program will be introduced and the EU can inform about the latest activities and projects which it is planned in the fields of employment and education.

The discussions with the MoES about YES providing assistance with the creation of the a Career Advisors Development Curriculum and an associated Accreditation process will be followed-up as will discussions with the MoLSP regarding the assistance that YES may provide to the drafting of the law on internships.

2.7. Monitoring and Evaluation

During the coming quarter it is proposed that the following actions are implemented:

- Monitoring of the youth workshop implementation by ESA, NGOs and school staffs.
- Post-evaluation questionnaire administration to all youth completing WRS workshops.
- Contributing to and supervising the production of the content for the YES Network website, such as success stories, newsletter.
- Implementing focus groups with youth involved in the NGO WRS workshops for discussing their background and status of unregistered unemployed persons.
- Maintaining and updating the project database.
- Creating a tracking system for youth that complete YES Network programs and continues to higher education or finds a job.
- Exploring opportunities for standardization of professional orientation tests for use in Macedonia.
- Workshops for teachers on using videos for professional development which will improve their delivery of instruction on work employability skills and career counseling.
- Developing the use of video-based M&E information collection.

3. Administration and Finance

3.1 Administration activities and outcomes

The following activities were finalized during October-December 2011:

- The PPD Conference in Ohrid was organized and logistically supported.
- Flip Cameras and books and materials for Career Centers and Job Clubs were shipped to Skopje and delivered to the Career Center and Job Clubs.
- 3 new Interns were recruited at the end of November 2011 for period of 6 months.
- VAT reimbursement application for Jan.-May 2011 was submitted to USAID in October 2011.
- Grantees for implementation of WRS training were selected.
- Sub grant contract was signed with ED Planetum.

- The VAT for January-May 2011 was reimbursed to the EDC Mk bank account in the full amount as requested (MKD592,651).
- Web site for YES Network project was designed and activated.
- Logistic support was provided for opening of Career Centers in 3 schools and Job Clubs in 2 ESA offices.
- The signing ceremony for establishment of the ESC Council was organized.

3.2 Administration activities proposed for the next quarter

The activities for the next quarter are the following:

- Logistical support for the JC and CC opening.
- Organizational and logistical support to ESC Tetovo and Bitola signing ceremony.
- Sub grant contracts for 3 selected grantees will be prepared and signed.
- Reports (and supporting documents) from the grantees will be received and reviewed.
- Organization and logistic support for the project presentations in 3 new municipalities.
- VAT reimbursement application for period June-September 2011 to be submitted to USAID.
- Disposition Plan for Furniture/Equipment purchase to be submitted to USAID for approval.
- Budget review and potential realignment will be prepared.